

REMARKS

Claims 1-41 are pending in the application. Claims 1-41 stand rejected. The rejections are traversed as discussed herein.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC §§ 102 and 103

Claims 1 and 27 stand rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by Dunn et al. (US Patent No. 5,999,612). Claims 1-41 stand rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dunn and in view of Vander Molen (US Patent No. 4,520,576). Applicant transversees the rejections.

Claim 1 recites in combination with its other limitations that a home-based client-side media computer for use within a home includes first and second connection ports for allowing a speech-based conversation to occur respectively over a home-based broadband connection and over a public switched telephone network. The home-based client-side media computer also includes a “plurality of speech engines that recognize speech and synthesize speech to allow the speech-based conversations to occur over the first connection port and the second connection port.” Speech recognition provides the ability to a computer “to understand the spoken word for the purpose of receiving commands and data input from the speaker” (see, Microsoft Press Computer Dictionary, Second Edition, Microsoft Press, 1994). This is exemplified in Applicant’s specification:

Speech engines 40 recognize the speech and words of the user. Many companies, such as Dragon Systems, Inc. located in Burlington, Massachusetts, provide speech recognition engines that may be used with the present invention. [(see, Applicant’s specification at page 5, lines 16-19)]

[...]

The home computer using an appropriate VoiceXML application and a speech recognition engine acquires from the user the name of

the person whom the user wishes to call. The address/appointment software application located in the home 32 is searched using the recognized name. The search results are spoken to the user using a text-to-speech engine. The user voices an affirmative that the person should be called. The home computer 34 recognizes the user's voiced affirmative and automatically dials the number of the person. [(see, Applicant's specification at page 7, lines 15-22)]

As shown in a definition of speech recognition and in the examples in Applicant's specification, speech recognition is used to understand speech.

The office action maintains on page 5 that Dunn implies a plurality of speech engines that recognize speech and synthesize speech to allow the speech-based conversations to occur over the first connection port and the second connection port. Applicant respectfully disagrees. The teaching of Dunn regarding use of an adapter does not imply any functionality related to speech recognition (or speech synthesis). The adapter of Dunn is for a different purpose as shown in the following passage from Dunn:

The adapter attaches to a computer, one or more telephones, the PSTN, and the broadband network. During utility power outages, switch circuitry in the adapter connects attached devices directly to lines in the PSTN, so that existing power support functions of the PSTN are fully utilizable. At other times, the adapter conditionally routes outgoing telephone calls from the attached devices to either the PSTN or cable network. Conditions determining the routing of outgoing calls can be set by users and also determined automatically (e.g. as logical functions of called numbers). [(see, the abstract of Dunn)]

As shown in this passage from Dunn, the adapter of Dunn performs no understanding of speech. However as shown through a technical dictionary and examples in Applicant's specification, the understanding of speech is a fundamental operation of speech recognition. Because there is no understanding of speech by the adapter in Dunn, the

adapter cannot be performing any speech recognition impliedly or otherwise and thus Dunn is completely lacking this limitation of claim 1.

Moreover Applicant respectfully disagrees with the office action's position that the Vander Molen reference discloses such limitations of claim 1. Vander Molen teaches placing speech recognition capability directly in a home appliance, such as a clothes dryer. Figures 1 and 2 of Vander Molen definitively place the speech recognition module 50 within the clothes dryer. However claim 1 makes it clear that the speech engines to recognize and synthesize speech are located with a "home-based client side media computer."

At best the combination of the references may teach that a home appliance itself embodied with a micro-computer (which is not a media computer) is to perform speech recognition. However, nowhere in Vander Molen or Dunn is there disclosure or suggestion that speech engines for recognizing (i.e., to understand speech) and synthesizing speech are contained within a home-based media computer as required by claim 1.

Vander Molen actually teaches away from the home-based client-side media computer configuration of claim 1 since Vander Molen teaches that an appliance should have a speech recognition module and a speech synthesis module. This would mean, according to Vander Molen, that if five appliances were to be controlled by speech, then each of the five appliances would have to have speech recognition modules and speech synthesis modules. This could result in many disadvantages, such as resulting in multiple maintenance problems. Because the references whether considered alone or in

combination do not disclose, teach, or suggest the limitations of claim 1, claim 1 is allowable and should proceed to issuance.

Claim 27 recites, in combination with its other limitations, "recognizing speech and synthesizing speech to allow the speech-based conversation to occur over the Internet network and the public switched telephone network." Claim 27 has been amended to recite that the recognizing of speech includes an understanding of speech. Vander Molen does not have a plurality of speech engines on a home-based client-side media computer, but instead places a speech recognition module and a speech synthesis module in the appliance itself. Due to such significant differences, claim 27 is allowable over Vander Molen whether considered alone or in combination with the other cited references.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are in a condition for allowance, and therefore the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this case to issuance.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: June 16, 2006

By: 

John V. Biernacki
Reg. No. 40,511
JONES DAY
North Point
901 Lakeside Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44114
(216) 586-3939